**Summer Reading List for Incoming 8th Graders 2013**

**book descriptions by  Amazon.com**

***The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green:** A soulful novel that tackles big subjects--life, death, love--with the perfect blend of levity and heart-swelling emotion. Hazel is sixteen, with terminal cancer, when she meets Augustus at her kids-with-cancer support group. The two are kindred spirits, sharing an irreverent sense of humor and immense charm, and watching them fall in love even as they face universal questions of the human condition--How will I be remembered? Does my life, and will my death, have meaning?--has a raw honesty that is deeply moving.

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak** : Set during World War II in Germany, this groundbreaking novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can’t resist–books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau.

[***Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and its Legacy***](http://erclk.about.com/?zi=16/3GSx)**by Albert Marrin:**On March 25, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City burst into flames.  The factory was crowded.  The doors were locked to ensure workers stay inside.  One hundred forty-six people mostly women—perished; it was one of the most lethal workplace fires in American history until September 11, 2001. This book tells the story of the pride and activism of fearless immigrants and women who stood up to business, got America on their side, and finally changed working conditions for our entire nation.

***Bruiser* by Neal Shusterman:** Is it possible to experience joy if you don’t experience pain? Is absorbing someone’s pain a gift or a curse? Shusterman explores these central questions in this thought-provoking new book. Sixteen-year-old Tennyson fumes when he learns his twin sister, Bronte, is dating Bruiser, the guy voted Most Likely to Go to Jail, but Bronte insists Bruiser is misunderstood. Tennyson is eventually won over and befriends Bruiser, and that’s when the twins notice something odd. Their cuts and bruises disappear overnight while Bruiser is a mass of new hurts; somehow he takes on the pain, both physical and emotional, of the people he cares for.

***Or Give Me Death: A Novel of Patrick Henry's Family* by Ann Rinaldi:** Students know Patrick Henry as one of our founding fathers. But to his kids, he was just dad. This book tells the story of Henry's family from the perspective of his two eldest daughters, growing with an absent father and a mentally ill mom. Although fiction, the text is grounded in historical fact, though Rinaldi's suggestion that it was actually Sarah Henry who first uttered "Give me liberty or give me death" from her confines in the cellar is evocative, and encourages kids to delve beyond the traditional accounts in history books.

***The Omnivore's Dilemma for Kids: The Secrets Behind What You Eat* by Michael Pollan**

Based on the best-selling adult book of the same title, this (slightly) shortened version will appeal to thoughtful, socially responsible teens. Pollan has done an amazing amount of research, both of the typical kind (there are 16 pages of footnotes) and the more personal kind. His own research includes slaughtering a chicken himself and eating a fast-food meal in a moving car with his family. He explains complicated issues clearly, offers compelling evidence of the environmental damage done by what he calls the industrial meal, and urges readers not to look away from animal-welfare issues:

***A Night To Remember* by Walter Lord:** She was the world's biggest-ever ship.  A luxurious miracle of twentieth-century technology, the *Titantic* was equipped with the most ingenious safety devices of the time.  Yet on a moonlit night in 1912, the "unsinkable" *Titantic* raced across the glassy Atlantic on her maiden voyage, with only twenty lifeboats for 2,207 passengers.  *A Night To Remember* is the gut-wrenching, minute-by minute account of her fatal collision with an iceberg and how the resulting tragedy brought out the best and worst in human nature.

***Gift* by Andrea J. Buchanan**: A thriller, centered around mysterious protagonist Daisy Jones, the new girl in school with a secret, supernatural gift. When Daisy finds herself and her friends wrapped up in paranormal activity, it’s up to her to exercise control of her power before it’s too late. The fast-paced narrative and a killer twist at the end.

***Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton:**  Fourteen-year-old Ponyboy, his brothers, and his friends are poor outcasts--"greasers." They have little but always stick together. After they're victims of the town's "socs (socials)--kids with lots of money, tough cars, and chips on their shoulders--everyone comes to realize how deep and serious their divide is. No character is all good or all bad, and when the final violent confrontation erupts, listeners are sorrowful but not shocked. This moving story is excellent for all ages and perfect to illustrate both sides of bullying.

***Close to Famous*** **by Joan Bauer:** When twelve-year-old Foster and her mother land in the tiny town of Culpepper, they don't know what to expect. But folks quickly warm to the woman with the great voice and the girl who can bake like nobody's business. Soon Foster - who dreams of having her own cooking show one day - lands herself a gig baking for the local coffee shop, and gets herself some much-needed help in overcoming her biggest challenge - learning to read . . . just as Foster and Mama start to feel at ease, their past catches up to them. Thanks to the folks in Culpepper, though Foster and her mama find the strength to put their troubles behind them for good.

***The Grimm Legacy*** **by Polly Shulman:** Elizabeth has just started working as a page at the New York Circulating Material Repository - a lending library of objects, contemporary and historical, common and obscure. And secret, too - for in the repository's basement lies the Grimm Collection, a room of magical items straight from the Grimm Brother's fairy tales. But the magic mirrors and seven-league boots and other items are starting to disappear. And before she knows it, she and her fellow pages - handsome Marc, perfect Anjali, and brooding Aaron - are suddenly caught up in an exciting, and dangerous, magical adventure.

***All Good Children by* Catherine Austen:**Max, his sister Ally and their mother return home to Middleton to find Ally’s classmates acting strange. It is the future, and the government has created a “vaccine” to make kids easier to teach- they are less rowdy, less likely to question, and willing to obey any direction. Max’s family has a choice: to be “vaccinated”, to flee their home, or stay and fight.

***Ashes* by Ilsa Bick** :  Alex, Tom, and Ellie join forces after an electromagnetic pulse sweeps through the sky. The pulse kills most of the world’s population and destroys all computer devices, but it also turns some who remain into zombies or gives them superhuman senses.